

November 17, 2017

Castor D. Chasten
Principal Planner
Community Planning & Development Services

Mr. Chasten,

On behalf of the Montgomery County Department of Technology Services, please accept the enclosed application and materials for a variance from the City of Rockville Zoning Code.

Montgomery County is proposing to install a 60' "stub tower" on the roof of the Executive Office Building (EOB) at 101 Monroe Street, Rockville, Maryland. Antennas and ancillary equipment will be attached to the tower. The tower will be used to support the County's Public Safety Radio System, as part of the Public Safety System Modernization Project.

The proposed tower is in the public interest because it will allow for effective provision of public safety services and communication

Montgomery County police, fire, and emergency first responders communicate by radio on the County's 800 MHz radio system, managed by the Department of Technology Services. The system consists of a network of fixed interconnected base stations that allow communication through County issued handheld radio units. First responders use this system during emergency situations to communicate with dispatch centers, coordinate responses, and ensure rapid, effective deployment of personnel.

Montgomery County is required to provide effective signal level coverage to at least 95% of the County and the territory within three miles of the County border. When effective signal level coverage is not available, disruptions in communication can cause delays and inefficiencies in emergency responses. Delays in response time and communications can negatively impact first responders' ability to provide critical services to the public.

As part of the Public Safety System Modernization Project, Montgomery County is upgrading its current system to deploy modern antenna technology, providing better, more reliable, and more flexible radio capability to first responders. This upgrade requires the addition of base stations in the network to extend coverage and improve reliability.

The proposed tower will allow Montgomery County to install antennas and equipment for the 800 MHz system in an area in need of better coverage. The location will provide first responders in and around the City of Rockville with effective, reliable radio communications at signal levels that perform indoors, in residential buildings, and in commercial buildings.

The proposed tower will not be injurious to the neighborhood because the proposed location is the least obtrusive location

Montgomery County has existing equipment on the roof of the EOB, including a 40' stub tower supporting other County communications equipment. Montgomery County is proposing to install an additional 60' stub tower on the roof, on which it will install antennas and associated equipment. The additional height is required for effective operation and coverage.

Installing the proposed tower at the EOB will prevent the proliferation of additional antenna sites, by allowing the County to maintain a consolidated site with multiple technologies on a single rooftop. Rather than altering the appearance of another building, Montgomery County can use its existing asset to maximize effectiveness while minimizing impact on the surrounding area.

In addition to the existing stub tower on the EOB, other buildings in the area also have existing antenna installations, including a stub tower greater than 19' on the roof of the 51 Monroe building. These types of installations on the tallest buildings in the City have previously been found not to unduly impact the area. By clustering these stub towers in a small area and locating them high above street level, their visual obtrusiveness can be lessened.

For the reasons outlined above, Montgomery County submits that this proposal is consistent with the Zoning Ordinance because it is in harmony with the general health, safety, and welfare. Montgomery County respectfully requests that the variance be approved.

If you have any questions about this application or need any further information, please feel free to contact me.

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Agent for RCS

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